

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 09988 300508Z

21

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
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R 300333Z JUL 74
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7272
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 9988

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, PBOR, VS, CB
SUBJ: GVN/GKR DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE AREAS: DRILLSHIP DEPARTS
DISPUTED WATERS

REF: SAIGON 9520

1. THE FOLLOWING INFOZTION SUPPLEMENTING REPORT REFTEL WAS
OBTAINED FROM PETER GEIPKE, RESIDENT MANAGER OF MOBIL'S
EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM. HE RECENTLY VISITED
SINGAPORE TO CHECK INTO STATUS OF DRILLSHIP.

2. ACCORDING TO GELPKE DRILLSHIP GLOMAR IV, WHICH HAD BEEN
LOCATED IN BLOCK 30 IN DISPIUED AREA SINCE JULY 4, WAS TOWED
BY A TUG TO SINGAPORE FOR REPAIR ON OR ABOUT JULY 21. GLOMAR IV
HAD BEEN CONTRACTED BY ELF-ERAP TO DRILL TWO HOLES UNDER AN
OFFSHORE CONCESSION OBTAINED FROM THE KHMER GOVERNMENT. DRILL-
SHIP WAS DIABLED WHEN ITS ELECTRICAL CONTROL PANEL WAS COM-
PLETELY DESTROYED BY A FLASH FIRE CAUSED BY A SHORT CIRCUIT.
GLOMAR IV WILL BE LAID UP FOR REPARIS UNTIL MIDDLE OF AUGUST. MOBIL,
WHICH HAD HOPED TO START DRILLING WITH THIS RIG IN CONCESSION AREAS
OFF VIETNAM IN SEPTEMBER, NOW DOES NOT EXPECT TO HAVE USE OF
GLOMAR IV UNTIL END OF OCTOBER AT THE EARLIEST.

3. GELPKE STATED THAT AN UNIDENTIFIED NAVAL VESSEL (PRESUMABLY
VIETNAMESE) CIRCLED DRILLSHIP ABOUT TWO AND A HALF WEEKS AGO.

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THEN ON JULY 18 ANOTHER NAVAL VESSEL APPROACHED CLOSE TO DRILLSHIP

AND IDENTIFIED ITSELF AS BELONGING TO VIETNAMESE NAVY. VESSEL CONTACTED DRILLSHIP BY RADIO AND ASKED FOLLOWING QUESTIONS: WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? DON'T YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN VIETNAMESE WATERS? GUN BOAT STAYED IN VICINITY UNTIL FOLLOWING MORNING.

4. COMMENT: APPARENTLY VIETNAMESE NAVY WAS MORE CLOSELY INVOLVED

WITH DRILLSHIP THAN WE REALIZED WHEN DRAFTING REFTEL. NEXT FEW WEEKS, WITH DRILLING RIG LAID UP IN SINGAPORE, MIGHT PROVIDE A FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN AGREEMENT. WE HAVE SUGGESTED DESIRABILITY OF NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO NGUYEN HOAN, WHO IS ASSISTANT FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ALSO A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM BOARD. WE WONDER IF THERE IS ANYTHING EMBASSY PHNOM PENH COULD APPROPRIATELY DO TO ENCOURAGE A SOLUTION, PERHAPS ALONG LINES OF PARA 2 REFTEL. END COMMENT.
LEHMANN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, PETROLEUM, OFFSHORE DRILLING, OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS, TERRITORIAL WATERS VIOLATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SAIGON09988
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740206-0528
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974076/aaaaaeqh.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: SAIGON 9520
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <24 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GVN/GKR DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE AREAS: DRILLSHIP DEPARTS DISPUTED WATERS
TAGS: ENRG, PBOR, VS, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005